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ABSTRACT

Discussion of teaching methods used with the text, "Deutsch, Erstes Buch" by Hugo Mueller, focuses on practical approaches to the problem of teaching culture through the spoken language and the use of pattern practice. While concentrating on Chapter Eight, "In der Sommerfrische," discussion is presented in subdivisions characteristic of every chapter: (1) the role of the picture, (2) the conversation (Unterhaltung), (3) questions pertaining to the conversation (Fragen zur Unterhaltung), (4) the reading selection (Lesestueck), (5) useful expressions, (6) pattern drills, (7) grammar drills, (8) free conversation (Untehalten Sie sich auf deutsch!), and (9) the use of tapes. Concluding remarks strongly recommend the use of the dictation-drill and question-answer testing technique. (RL)

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AN APPLIED METHODOLOGY FOR THE USE OF DEUTSCH, ERSTES BUCH

By G. Richard Dimler, S.J.

With the introduction of the inductive method of language teaching into many schools across the country, and the attempt to teach culture through the spoken language and in particular through the use of pattern practice, immediate and vital problems have arisen concerning the practical application of this new methodology in the "existential" classroom situation. What the author has set down are various practical approaches to some of these problems and how he came to enjoy a modicum of success in the field of language instruction in the "new Key", through the adoption of the textbook, Deutsch, Erstes Buch by Hugo Mueller in The Modern Series in Foreign Languages.[1] The author wishes to stress that these approaches solved difficulties for him only after considerable experimentation and extensive practical application IN THE CLASSROOM. The results, the author firmly hopes, are now a living actuality among his former students, at Fordham, Marquette and Loyola College.

For purposes of clarity and order we will consider the methodological divisions and components of each chapter in DEUTSCH, ERSTES BUCH as isolated units. However, it must

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be stressed that in the classroom, these "diverse" units within each chapter form a concrete integrated whole, all aimed at producing linquistic skill in the student, e.g., oral and aural competency in the foreign language. Subsequent to this discussion, we shall attempt to integrate and demonstrate the use of the language tapes which accompany the text. The following schema of subdivisions is used in the discussion: (A) The role of the picture; (B) the Conversation (Umterhaltung); (C) Questions pertaining to the Conversation (Fragen zur Umterhaltung); (D) The Reading Selection (Lesestueck); (E) Useful Expressions; (F) Pattern Drills; (G) Grammar Drills including "supply the correct endings", "wie heisst dass auf deutsch?" (H) Free Conversation (Unterhalten Sie sich auf deutsch); (I) The Use of Tapes. To induce greater practicality in our discussion, we have arbitrarily chosen lesson eight, which is entitled In Der Sommerfrische.[2]

The PICTURE

The function of the picture which accompanies each lesson is to concretize the accompanying Conversation as a seen entity, thus providing a point of departure for the student's use in speaking and for purposes of aural-comprehension. At the beginning of each lesson, before the Conversation is begun, the teacher should give a brief (ten to fifteen minute)

talk on the contents of the picture which will provide not only a sound base of new vocabulary for the student and an exercise in specific grammar points, but also is a decided means to increase aural comprehension. In particular, the teacher should have a complete grasp of the new vocabulary of the lesson and emphasize these "new objects" through the picture. For example, in the Eighth Picture, the well, the horse, the painting, the animals, etc. need immediate emphasis by the teacher. Since these new vocabulary words will be met later, principally in the Conversation and the Reading-Selection, it will readily be seen how effective a description will be which emphasizes these new words, specifically in aiding the student to grasp the new vocabulary with a minimum of difficulty.

After the teacher's brief description, he or she should begin orally to test the students on their aural comprehension of what has been said by asking questions relative to the important points mentioned above, in particular with regard to the accompanying conversation. By subtly introducing the new "language matter" with an eye to the conversation, the teacher can easily and in a general way reconstruct the forthcoming conversation, which is the students first real "obstacle" in the new lesson. During the teacher's brief talk on the picture, he should make a real effort to speak quite slowly and deliberately, gearing his talk to the talents and ability of his students.

Aside from the very important aspect of providing a point of departure for the new lesson, of providing the student with an easy meeting ground with the new vocabulary, and of helping to constantly stimulate his comprehension of the spoken language, the Bild-Vorlesung will provide the student with a model presentation which the teacher himself on subsequent class days will demand in the form of a brief descriptive talk from the students. With this picture on display and in full perspective on the classroom wall, a constant reference point for the teacher's pedagogical endeavors in this particular lesson is maintained. Its continuing presence there for the student to see will stir up those "memory-images" which are so vital a factor to the language-learning process in accordance with valid laws of language learning.

After the introductory "lecture" by the teacher at the beginning of the lesson, the picture should be briefly referred to at the beginning of the next few classes in order to test, remind and consolidate, either in question form or in conversation, the matter to be learned in the lesson. In addition, on consecutive days, individual students can be called upon for purposes of oral quizzing. The student can be asked to face the room with the picture as background and then answer the questions put to him by the teacher. The student should also describe the contents

of the picture, which, incidentally, will provide him with an opportunity to develop his ability to express himself in public.

CONVERSATION

In introducing the Conversation for each lesson, the teacher should first read through the conversation in its entirety, having the students follow him in their own textbooks, being careful to emphasize those pronunciation and intonational points which he knows can cause difficulty to the student. Then during a second reading, the teacher should read through the conversation character by character, e.g., der Bauer, & Die Dame aus der Grossstadt, der Bauer, etc., and have the students repeat in unison what has been said. In this first general repetition of the conversation, the teacher will probably detect common errors of mispronunciation and can be alert to the possible mispronunciation of the German "l", "r", "ch" sounds, and the umlaut. This initial spoken introduction will help the student understand what will be expected of him later, even if only in a somewhat vague fashion. But the primary purpose of these first exercises is to inculcate proper habits of pronunciation or, contrariwise, root out improper German speaking habits.

When this second repetition has been completed, the teacher should instruct one-half of the room to alternate

with the other half and begin to go through the conversation character by character. At this juncture, the teacher should circulate among the students to detect pronunciation errors that might be of a more subtle nature. The next point of procedure is to assign parts of the conversation to predetermined rows and have these rows proceed through the conversation a fourth time. Since in this fourth reading the student has been gradually isolated and individualized, an excellent opportunity is present for the teacher to root out pronunciation or intonational deficiencies of each individual student. At the fifth reading through the Conversation students can be assigned individual parts.

On consecutive days the conversation should be reconstructed by memory. The teacher assigns parts; he corrects errors in mispronunciation (possibly having the other students serve as judges in this matter, to keep them aware of pronunciation misdemeanors); finally, he can grade correctness of speech and control of memory. Since the conversation contains in nucleus the new grammar and vocabulary, this memorization is absolutely necessary. To stimulate interest in these memorized conversations, brief skits can be performed by the students under the teacher's direction. This will serve to reinforce a point established above, the value of public speaking and, perhaps, what is more important at this time, to produce near optimum results in speaking and handling the

second language on a basic level of competence.

After some few class days, every student should have this conversation THOROUGHLY memorized and be prepared to assume any part in it and be ready for questions on its content. You will note here a process whereby, at first, the teacher alone speaks in German and then gradually the students assume more and more the role of the "German conversant", until, finally, the student has gained an elemental mastery of the conversation through the teacher's energetic demands and constant repetition. Furthermore, this follows a cardinal axiom in the learning process -- SELF ACTIVITY ON THE PART OF THE STUDENT, and it is at this point that the fruit of the teacher's labor first takes shape in the student.

QUESTIONS ON THE CONVERSATION

The questions (Fragen zur Unterhaltung) placed at the conclusion of each conversation in the text impel the student to express accurately and precisely the essential thought of the Conversation. "What kind of a picture is the lady painting?" "What colors is she using on the painting?" These and similar questions compel the student to COMPREHEND and not merely memorize the matter of the conversation. They also aid him to use in an original way the new German words he has just learned and also apply the corresponding grammar

constructions. These questions should be introduced as soon as a considerable amount of the conversation has been memorized.

The teacher may use these Fragen as testing matter either orally or even in written quizzes. He should have one student ask any other student in the class the questions, and demand intelligent, simple, clear, concise German answers in return. He should have from ten to twenty students (or more) run through the questions until the required answers and the correct oral pronunciation is mastered COMPLETELY by the students.

But the teacher ought not limit himself to a mere perusal of these questions in an automatic way. It is highly recommended and useful if he compose further questions not found in the book and demand an adequate student response to these original queries. This method is especially opportune in a class of more than average ability and, I venture to say, it is imperative in an honors class which should be constantly challenged beyond the limits of the textbook whenever the opportunity presents itself.

An excellent device for making the questions more concrete is to use the picture attached to the lesson (mentioned in the previous part of the paper) which provides a further dimension in attempts to saturate the student's "linguistic" senses in the language learning process. As a consequence, the student speaks German after aurally com-

prehending the German question which he sees concretized in the picture. Thus three sense channels are utilized to induce the language patterns and structures in the student.

The teacher should not be too rigid in demanding a set, stereotyped, "pat" answer to the question. Rather he should ask for and demand flexibility, as far as possible, in the vocabulary and grammatical structure. But, above all, he should demand basically simple answers, uncomplicated in their structure, which the student can easily extract from the wording of the question. E.G.--Was haelt der Bauer von dem Bild? Der Bauer haelt von dem Bild, dass es ....

1 2 3 4 5
6 7 3 4 2 5 6 7

Another additional advantage in these questions is their ability to allow the student and the teacher opportunity to speak freely about the matter of the conversation. When an answer is given the teacher may use this answer itself as a point of departure in positing a second "free question" to the student. This provides interest and variety and gives the student what he needs above all at this stage - confidence.

LESESTUECK (Reading-Selection)

The Lesestueck offers the student a change in language style. It presents to him German as a written language. Hitherto he has heard German as a spoken language. In addition, the Lesestueck will give the student further information on specific cultural matters relevant to the lesson; such as, in

this 8th lesson the landscape characteristics of Germany and the relationship of the country to the life-style of the German. How can the teacher approach this section? It is suggested that he read through the reading selection sentence by sentence and have the entire class repeat in unison each sentence just as in the Conversation exercises. Then he may begin proceeding row by row, or in whatever method he finds best from his own experience, and direct individual students to read single sentences. This will give the teacher another opportunity to instill proper pronunciation habits and intonational patterns of the more technical words and phrases.

In subsequent classes, he should assign dictation exercises for which the students should be given adequate time to write in full the entire dictation. These dictation exercises will test both the student's aural comprehension and, what is highly valuable, at this stage force him to write German. With the initial emphasis placed on aural and oral ability, the teacher should not overlook opportunities to give dictation exercises, having the students write in German as it is being dictated. These dictation exercises may be used for daily quizzes or for a weekly test if the teacher wishes.

In this manner, the student knows that he is responsible for these new German words encountered in the reading-selection and for his ability to comprehend and write them correctly.

This will prove an incalculable asset for later College Board Testing Exams, which employ dictation and oral comprehension procedures in their tests. The Reading-selection can also provide the basis for oral tests by means of questions based on the text itself. The students can then be quizzed on their ability to speak German correctly, thus motivating them to give careful attention to the acquisition of an adequate Aussprache.

QUESTIONS ON THE READING-SELECTION
(Fragen zum Lesestueck)

The Fragen zum Lesestueck just as the Fragen zur Unterhaltung help the student to comprehend not only the thought content of the Reading-Selection but also help him to organize this content into correct speech patterns. It can readily be seen how invaluable these questions are for the attainment of our goals. The teacher has the option of either being a German "quiz master" or, for variety, he may have one of the better students do the questioning. The important point to be stressed in this area is the constant and continual repetition of the questions until the students have thoroughly mastered the adequate response.

The rapid-fire oral procedure on a given test day is an excellent method of producing desired results. To repeat what we have stated frequently, these questions can also be used as a basis for written exercises. The teacher repeats

each question once and then the student in required to write down his answer in a complete sentence. Writing and answering in complete sentences is very important since language patterns emerge best within the context of the complete sentence.

USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

At the very outset of a discussion on the useful expressions it must be stressed that they be committed to memory by the student inductively through class repetition rather than by pure memorization. By actual experience in the classroom, the author has found that students find these expressions quite attractive and useful for their private "joking sessions" outside of class. Through simple acquaintanceship with these expressions, it becomes clear that they will not have to be forced on the student and that very little encouragement will be needed to get the student to use them.

Although the useful expressions should not prove to be a great obstacle in the present methodology, it is suggested, however, that they be used frequently in oral and written tests and/or quizzes. But in addition to these latter usages, their impact and their utility will appear later in the "free conversation" which the teacher should conduct faithfully at specified times. It is well to emphasize that they be not just committed to memory and then left to lie dormant there, but rather the student should use them when he engages in little

classroom skits or periods of relaxation. Most students are quite eager to learn the German equivalent for "how are you?", "lots of good luck", "keep your fingers crossed", or "get on the ball". These are inherently interesting in se.

PATTERN DRILLS

We now approach the innersanctum or the "heart" of the present methodology, the language structural pattern, so essential to the language learning process. These pattern-drills serve as a basic unifying factor. The student has confronted these patterns previously in the conversation or in the Reading-Selection where they exist in their "natural setting". Now they are isolated as structural, grammatical units and varied to such a degree as to be highly useful entities for enhancing speaking and hearing proficiency. Since they have already been memorized in the Conversation, where the student first met them, they are by no means unknown quantities. Therefore, the student will recognize them as being already learned or as residual language matter, and his consequent approach to them is a "psychological pleasure".

In terms of classroom work, the patterns can be adapted readily for drill work. Through a simple process, where the teacher should go around the room until they are completely mastered, they present no great obstacle to the teacher or student. They lend themselves to a speedy classroom technique which should bring to the teacher and pupil a keen sense of

accomplishment. The teacher should not leave these drills until they are completely mastered: first, since they are an easy and flexible method of enlarging the students basic vocabulary; and, secondly, because they are of great value in aiding the student later to speak freely in the second language.

In summary, a two-pronged approach to their adequate mastery is recommended to the teacher. First, he should go through the entire class, allowing the students to leave their books open to the English equivalent of the pattern; secondly, once this operation has been completed, the teacher, as a final testing procedure, should have the students close their books and then enunciate the corresponding English pattern to specified students demanding the German equivalent. For example, "I think you better ask the policeman." "I think you better come along." This latter method is a final, infallible method in helping to gauge the student's progressive mastery of the patterns.

GRAMMAR DRILLS

The next division in each chapter of DEUTSCH ERSTES BUCH contains general grammar drills such as, "fill in the following", substitutions, "wie heisst das auf deutsch?", sentence completions, etc. In this section the attempt is made to consolidate, strengthen and confirm certain grammatical aspects of the lesson which up to

this point have not been strictly adverted to, since they were used in their natural habitat -- the actual language situation. Grammar features are stressed, such as; the use of the proper case of the article after a preposition which allows a choice of either the dative or the accusative depending upon the concept of either static locality or expressed motion; the plural forms of nouns in specific case endings, etc. The student is never instructed in these "grammar points" deductively or as isolated units, because he has already met them in the Conversation or Reading-selection. He has never encountered them in an unnatural way but only as they are used in an actual spoken situation, never synthetically, but always as real in the fullest sense of the word. This point can not be over-emphasized, particularly for those among us whose approach is or has been more grammatically-oriented.

Before these drills are begun, the writer recommends that the teacher, by a strict inductive method, tie in the Grammar section at the end of the chapter with these drills. Since the grammar points have already been memorized and utilized in a concrete context, it will be relatively easy to induct them and make them explicit. These inductive questions aimed at explicitating the grammar should be posited in very simple German and might run as follows: "Geben Sie mir ein Beispiel mit einer Dativ-Praeposition, mit einer Akkusativ-Praeposition von der Unterhaltung." The student, having thoroughly memorized

the Conversation, should answer the first question with "was machen Sie mit all den Bildern," and to the second question "Haengen Sie die zu Hause an die Waende?" These questions, of course, require adequate preparation from the teacher, but an easy check list which is placed in the grammar section of the text should quickly aid the teacher to operate this portion of the drill quite smoothly.

These questions and answers inducted from the Conversation are particularly pleasing and satisfyling to the student when he begins to realize that, when he memorized the Conversation, he, at the same time, acquired all the grammar. He realizes he has not been operating, so to speak, in a linguistic vacuum. Once the teacher has inducted the grammar in the chapter sufficiently he may with confidence begin the grammar exercises. If these drills can be managed smoothly, the teacher can be reasonably certain that his "grammar problem" is solved.

FREE CONVERSATION (Unterhalten Sie sich auf deutsch)

This section of the chapters in Deutsch Erstes Buch must be regarded as of great importance. It is in the student's ability at free conversation, where he is not forced to use memorized matter or a predetermined grammar exercise, that he can in the strict sense use his linguistic "wares". In the "free conversation" his backlog of vocabulary, useful expressions,

language patterns, etc., can all be put to use as a total unit of expression.

The teacher should definitely make plans to allow for a specified period in his teaching schedule for work on free conversation, even if for short periods. To stimulate the student to speak in a relaxed atmosphere he can have an area of the room set up for a skit. For this purpose he might appoint a skit committee from among the students to prepare the background and staging for the "Free Conversation." For example, for a scene in a restaurant, plates and other silverware can be used to concretize the abstract German terms for these articles. This arrangement might also be used for the regular memorized conversation. Much of this can be left to the teacher's own personal ingenuity, hence further elaboration is not needed.

It is well to encourage the student to employ those phrases he has already learned and used in the other sections of the lesson, or even from previous lessons. In this way, he will discover that what he has already memorized is highly valuable for speaking adequate basic German with fellow students in class during the Free Conversation.

This Free Conversation can be held between any two or three students among themselves or by a single student giving a brief resume of the contents of the illustrated picture accompanying the lesson. One very easy method for quick results

would be the following "quiz" situation. Limit each set of conversations to three to five minutes. Give a grade for each performance based on general good language usage and fluency. As a result, the students will put forth their best efforts, utilizing the time at their disposal in the best way possible. Also they will come to a quick realization of what you expect of them in this particular situation. Fundamentally, the scope of the free conversation period will depend for its success on a combination of two essential factors - the student's adequate command of the matter in the lesson, and, above all, the teacher's own initiative and high enthusiasm.

THE ROLE OF THE LANGUAGE TAPE

Each lesson in the text is accompanied by a language tape which contains most of the structural features in each lesson -- the Conversation, the questions on the Conversation, the Reading Selection, the questions on the Reading Selection, Useful Expressions and Pattern Drills. Its purpose is to bring the student into personal contact with a NATIVE GERMAN SPEAKER and to drill him repeatedly in the exercises of this particular lesson. It is a substitute for the teacher but not a completely adequate one, because of its essentially mechanical attributes. However, it can be used effectively to drill and inculcate into the student the basic material of the lesson.

The author used the language tape with considerable success in the following manner. After the entire lesson had been learned

quite adequately and before the day of an oral or written weekly quiz, the students were assembled in the language lab. Before the signal is given to the student to put on the individual earphones and before the teacher begins to play the tape, the student is informed that this will be his last formal contact with the lesson before the test. He may be allowed to use the tapes after school on his own time, but not with the group and generally without your presence and comments.

This restriction -- using the lab formally only on the day preceding a test -- is recommended for a two-fold reason: first, because by the time the student is allowed to enter the lab, he has been given adequate and sufficient preparation which will enable him to follow the tape confidently together with the native German speaker; secondly, he has a strong incentive to give his full and undivided cooperation to the tape since he realizes that, not only is this his last opportunity to review aurally and orally test matter for the following day, but also he is conscious that the teacher, in addition, will be grading him on his lab performance.

Later, after the first twelve lessons have been completed, it will be necessary to use the lab more frequently and once this point is reached it is recommended that the teacher make adequate adjustments along the above lines to the changing situation. In the beginning however, this single formal session

in the lab (which does not rule out the possibility of allowing the student to make use of the lab privately and informally) should be sufficient.

It is evident that the language tape which accompanies each lesson can be and is a highly effective tool in the language learning process. We mentioned above the advantage in the learning process of "saturating the student's sense channels". For this reason, it is advisable to allow the student to have an open book before him during the lab-session. He SEES the written language before him; he HEARS IT spoken by the native speaker; he responds ORALLY to the tape. The results of this saturation process should become evident in a short time.

During the lab period, the teacher should walk among the students for detection of errors. The student response to the tape questions will be a realistic indicator of how well the students have mastered the lesson. If the greater majority can respond without hesitation and in good German to the tape, the teacher can be reasonably certain that his students have gone far in learning the lesson.

It will be found that the student will respond to the lab-session in proportion to his desire to progress in the language and to the enthusiasm engendered by the teacher. Much depends on the attitude of the teacher. In summary, the language

lab will bring great success to student and to the teacher if it is used as a fine language tool, producing oral and aural efficiency.

CONCLUSION

Because of the emphasis that the German Advanced Placement Program test places on aural comprehension of the spoken language, it is strongly recommended that the teacher emphasize dictation-drill and question and answer testing of previously taped or actually spoken German selections. These selections may be conversations, dialogues or brief-lectures in format. At the conclusion of the selection the teacher should ask questions on what was heard. This tests the student's knowledge and gives the teacher and the student a quick index of the student's aural ability.

In strict dictation exercises, it is useful to have provocative material such as the nature of the weather in Germany, their forms of entertainment, sports, politics, etc. These topics the student should write down sentence by sentence, as the teacher reads the selection. Time should be given for this and, in the beginning, perhaps each sentence of the dictations should be repeated twice until the student becomes more acclimated and responsive to the newness of the words, etc.

It is sincerely hoped that these approaches will aid all language teachers who wish to give students the best in language teaching, and the proficiency needed through the approach offered by the Georgetown Series.

1 The series is edited by Leon Dostert and Hugo Mueller. Deutsch Erstes Buch has appeared in a revised edition, Erster und Zweiter Teil, Bruce, Milwaukee, 1967.

2 Chapter 8 is found on pp. 138-154 in the revised edition of Deutsch Erstes Buch, Erster Teil.